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ABSTRACT

Growing out of a series of lectures given at universities in the United States, Canada, and England, this book reopens the dialogue between literature and the life of its time. It draws dramatic connections between the imperial endeavor and the culture that both reflected and reinforced it, describing a general pattern of relationships between the modern metropolitan West and its overseas territories. Although much recent literary criticism has concentrated on narrative fiction, very little attention has been paid to its position in the history and world of empire. The reader/student will discover that narrative is central to the book's argument--that stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world and stories also become the way colonized people assert their own identity and the existence of their own history. The book focuses on individual works of literature that illuminate the British, French, and American imperial experience. Chapters in the book are: (1) Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories (with a focus on Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness"); (2) Consolidated Vision (with a focus on Jane Austen, Albert Camus, and Verdi's "Aida"); (3) Resistance and Opposition (with a focus on William Butler Yeats); and (4) Freedom from Domination in the Future (with a focus on American ascendancy in the world). (NKA)

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